



US009077311B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Yan et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 9,077,311 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** **Jul. 7, 2015**

(54) **ACOUSTIC FILTER AND METHOD OF
ACOUSTIC FILTER MANUFACTURE**

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(21) Appl. No.: **13/340,396**

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(22) Filed: **Dec. 29, 2011**

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(65) **Prior Publication Data**

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
H03H 9/70 (2006.01)
H03H 9/02 (2006.01)
H03H 9/54 (2006.01)
H03H 9/64 (2006.01)

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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC **H03H 9/706** (2013.01); **Y10T 29/49016** (2015.01); **H03H 9/02023** (2013.01); **H03H 9/02551** (2013.01); **H03H 9/02015** (2013.01); **H03H 9/02543** (2013.01); **H03H 9/542** (2013.01); **H03H 9/6483** (2013.01)

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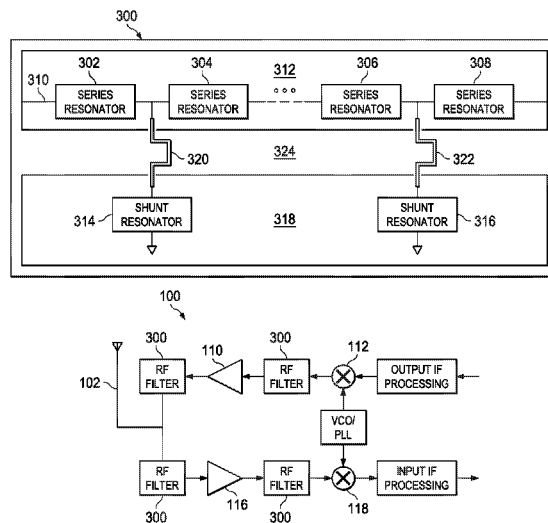
(57) **ABSTRACT**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC ... H03H 9/706; H03H 9/725; H03H 9/02023; H03H 9/02551; H03H 9/02015; H03H 9/02543; H03H 9/542; H03H 9/6483; Y10T 29/49016
USPC 333/133, 193, 194, 195, 196, 186, 187, 333/188; 310/360

An acoustic filter and method of acoustic filter manufacture provides a plurality of series acoustic resonators coupled in series on a first resonator substrate, a plurality of shunt resonators on a second resonator substrate, and a support substrate. The first and second resonator substrates are mounted on the support substrate. The filter further provides a plurality of electrical connections, wherein each respective electrical connection electrically couples a respective one of the plurality of shunt resonators to a respective one of the plurality of series acoustic resonators.

25 Claims, 9 Drawing Sheets

See application file for complete search history.



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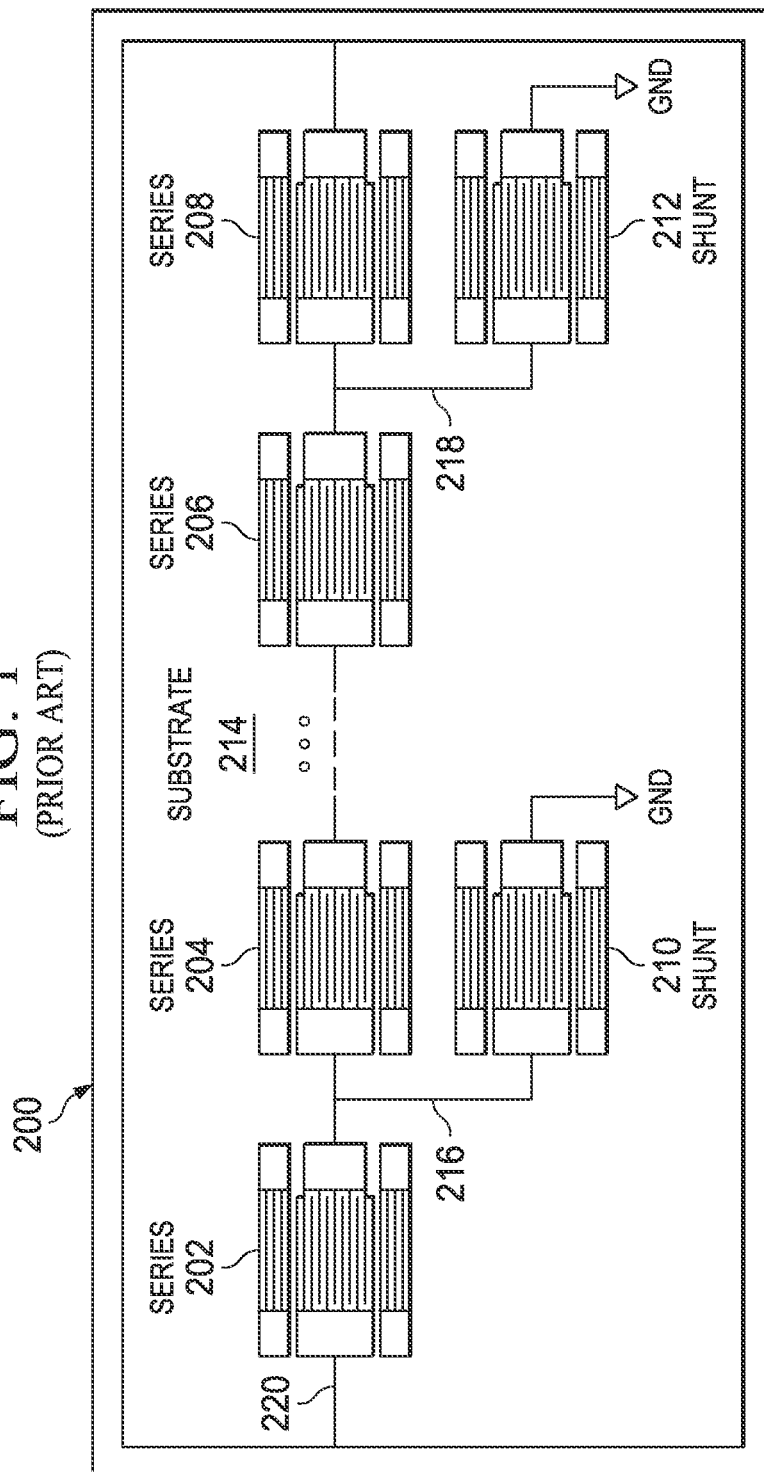
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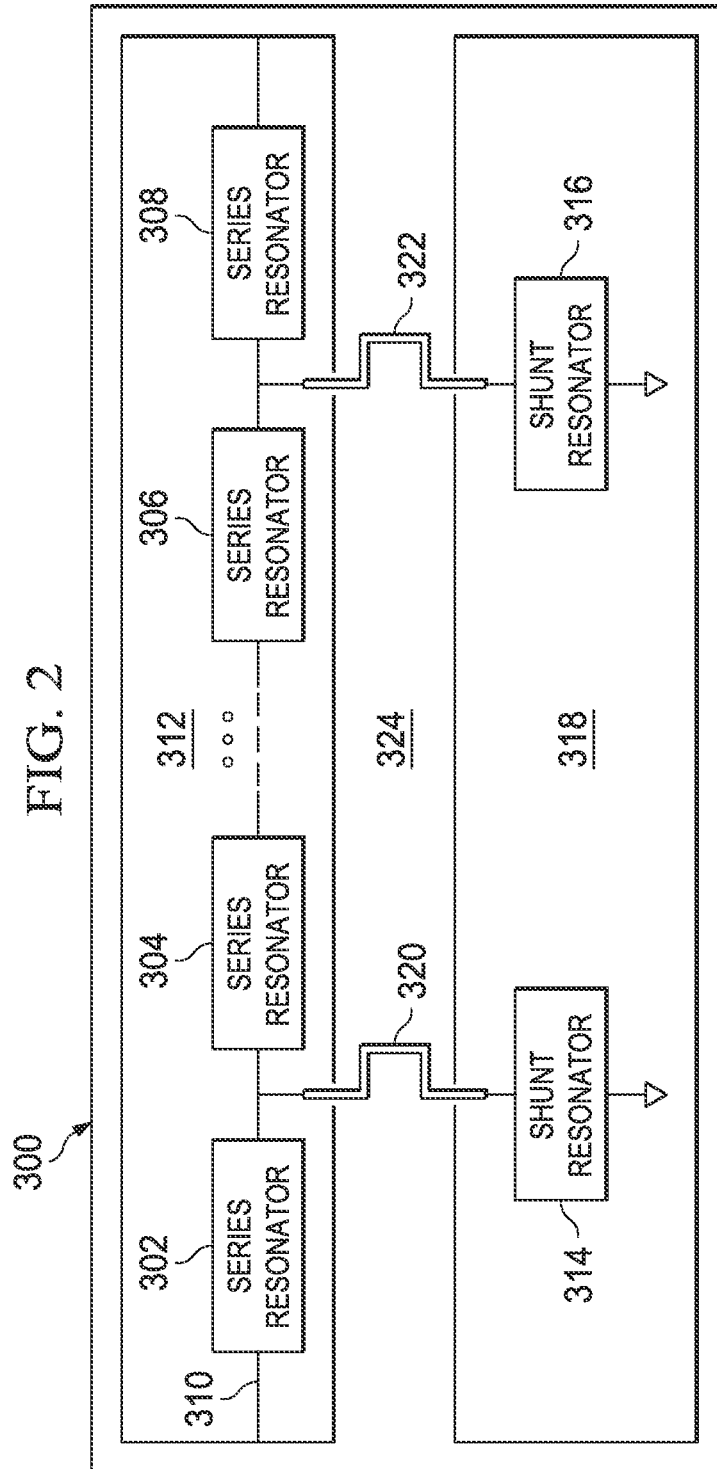
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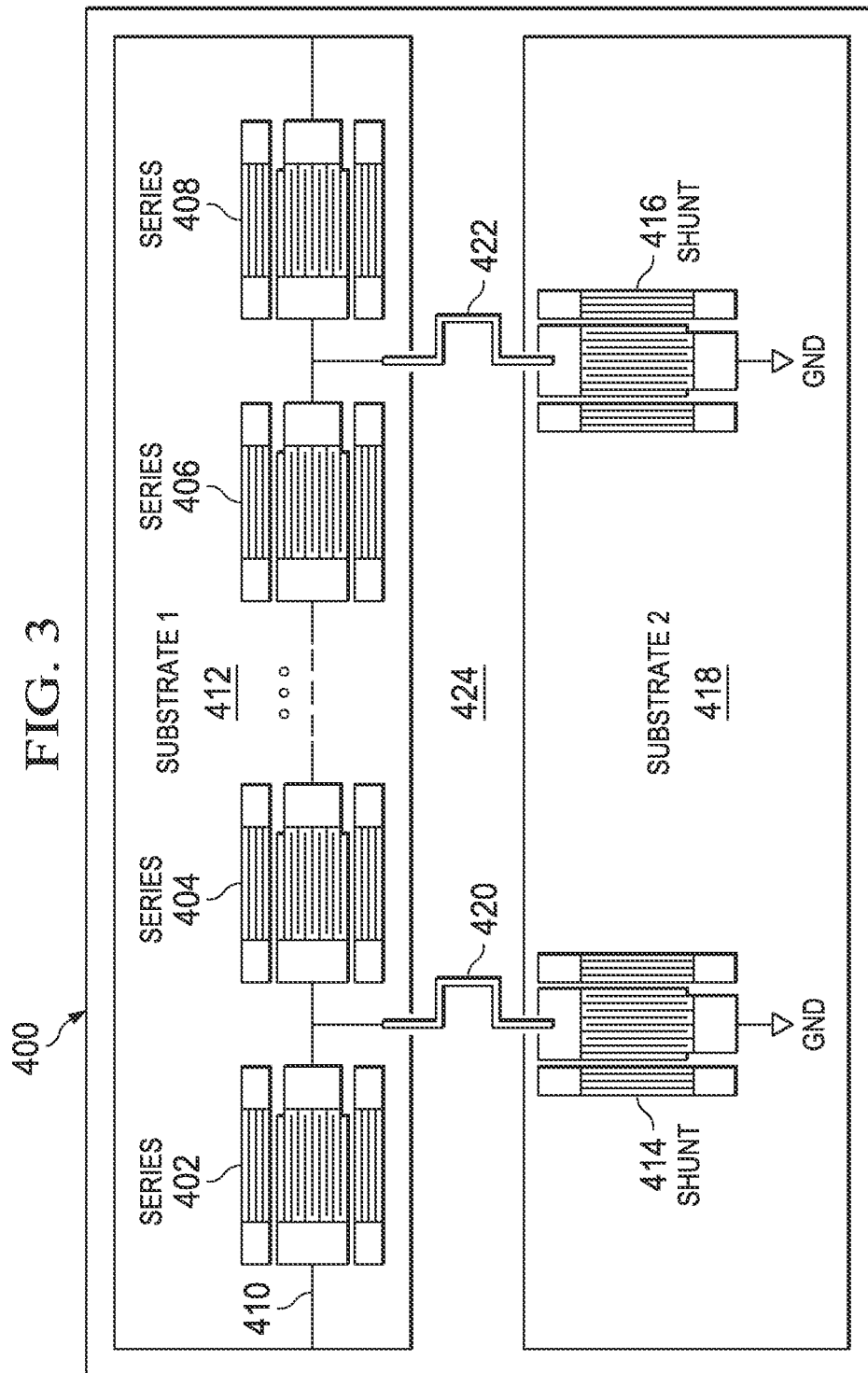
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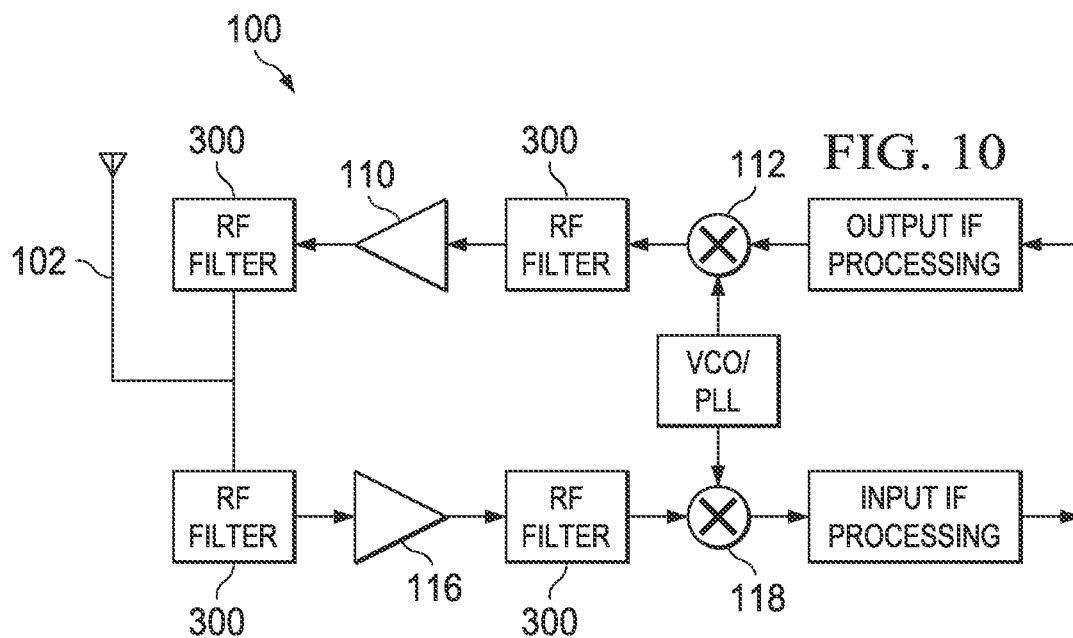
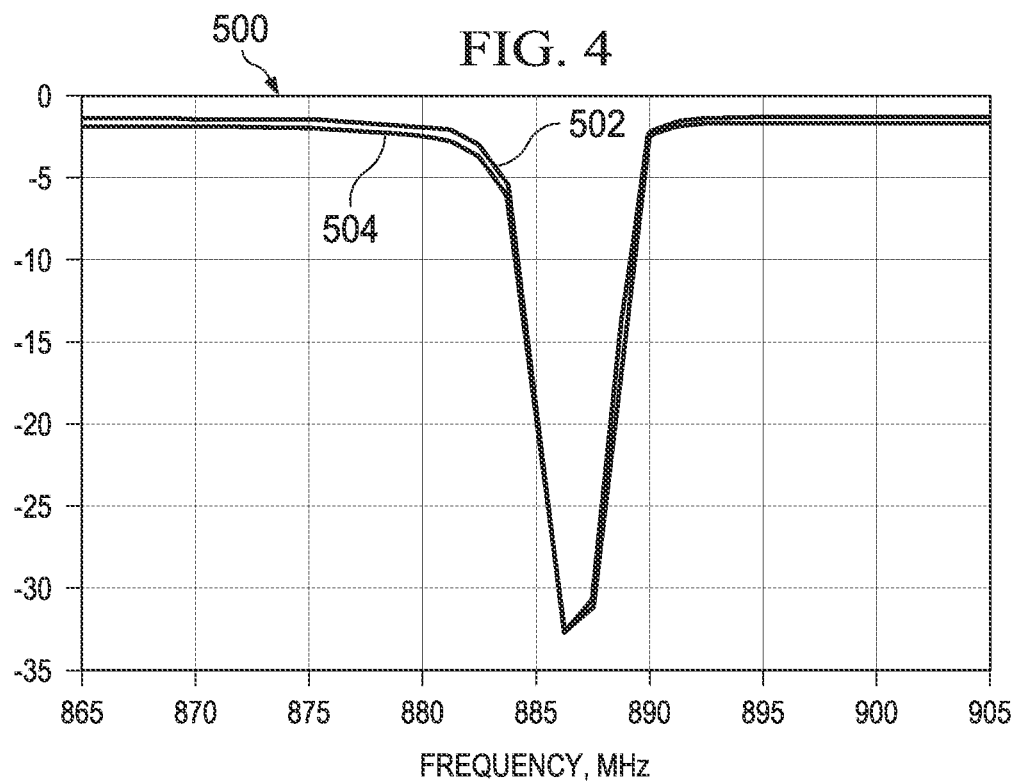
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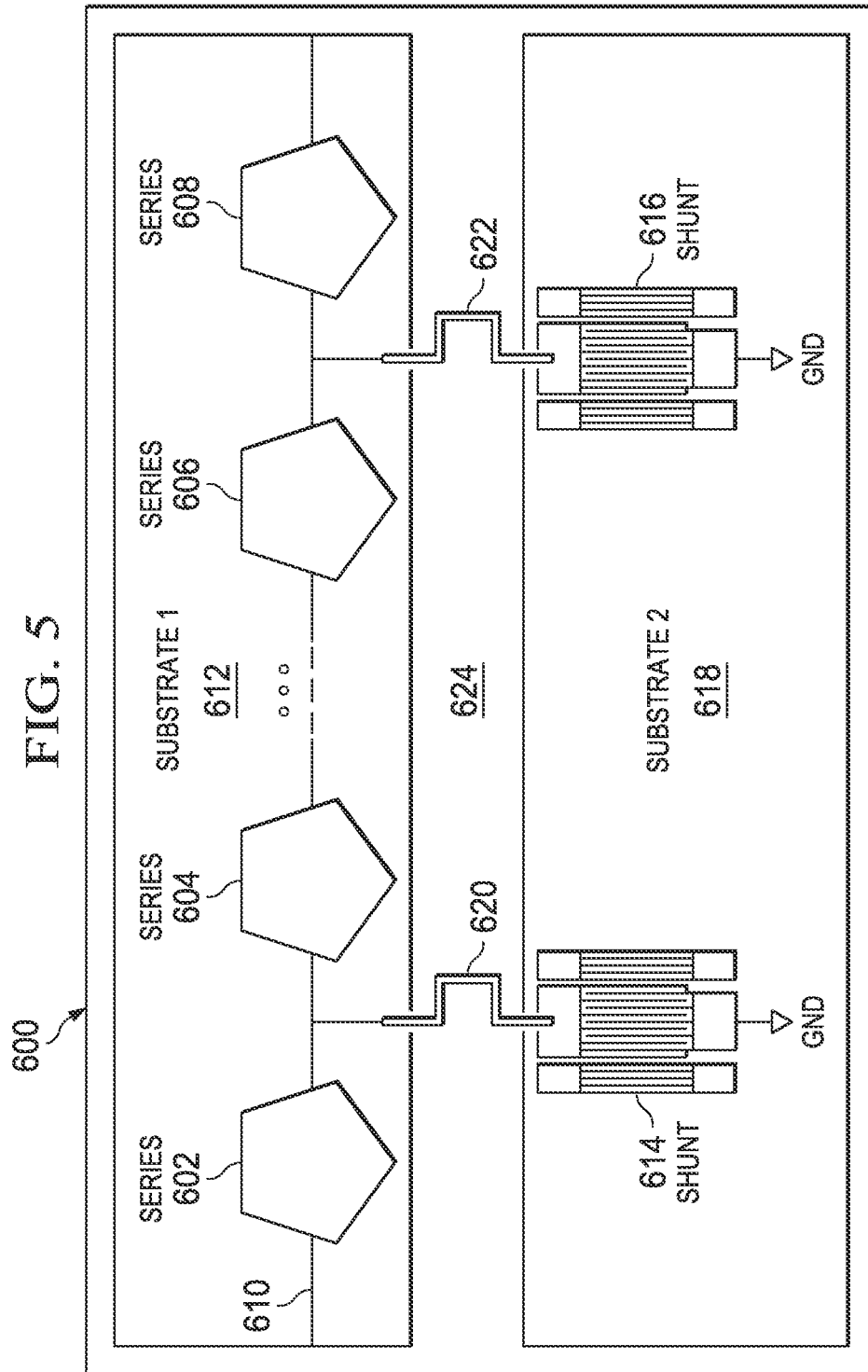
FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

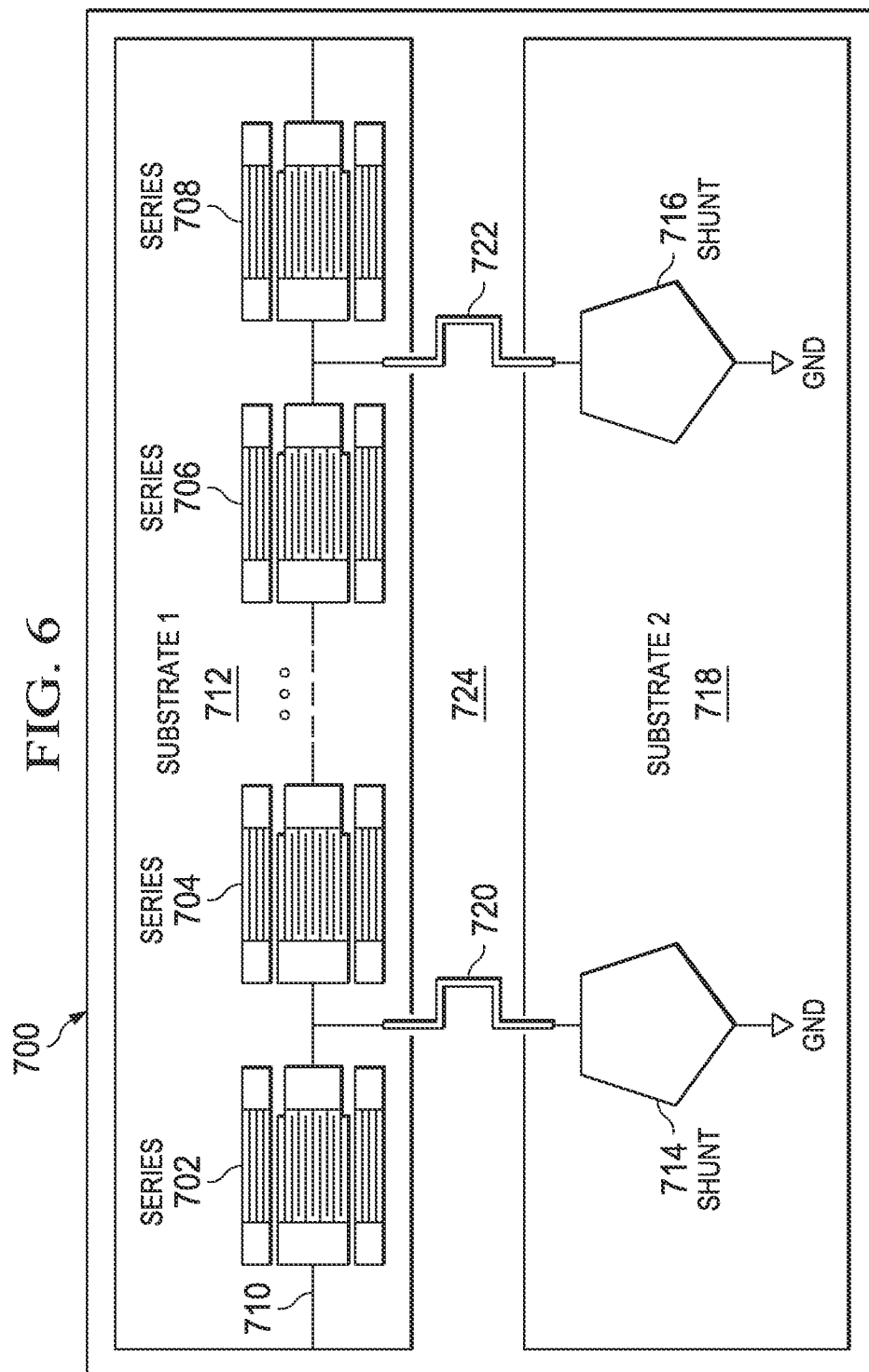


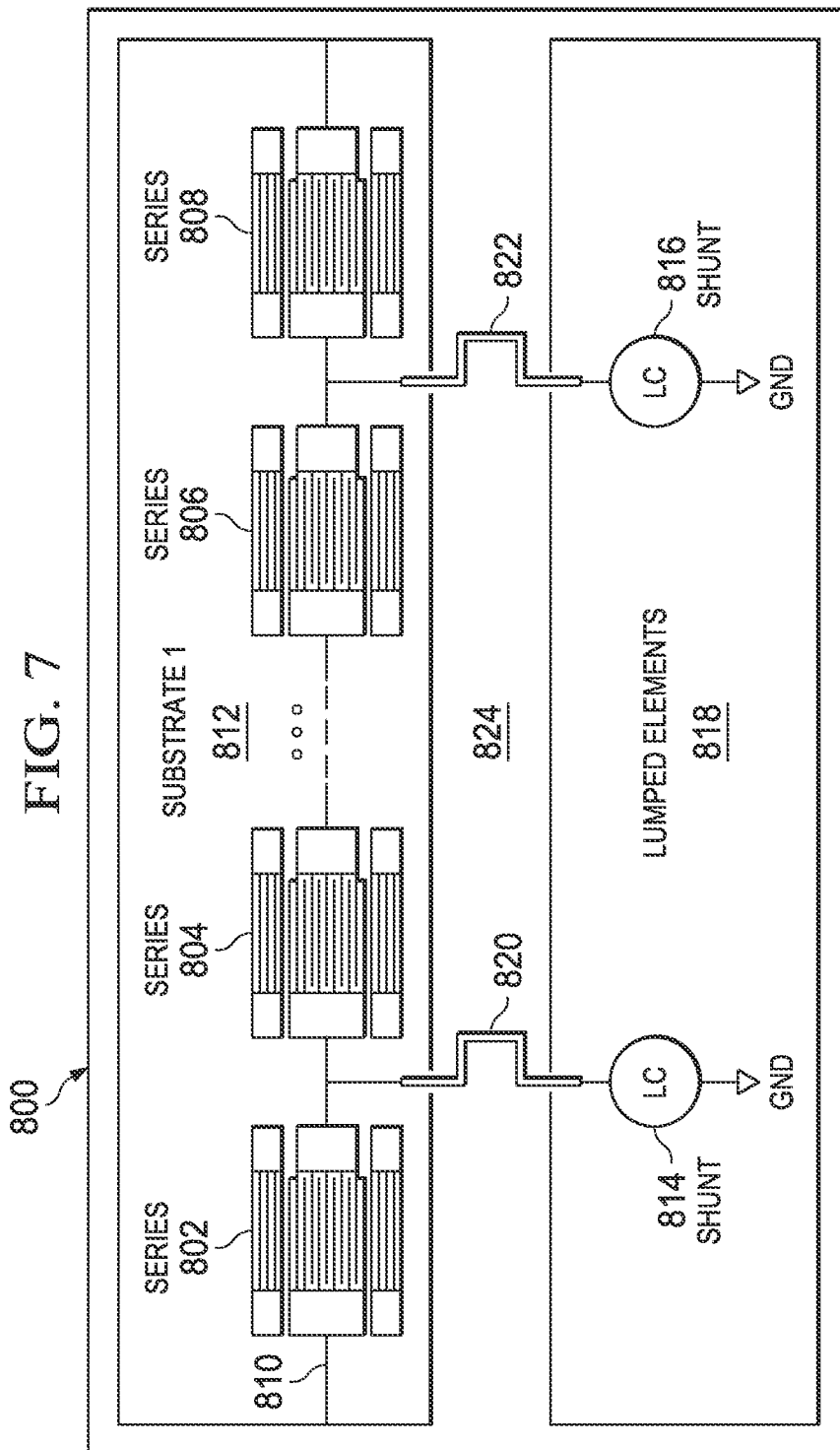


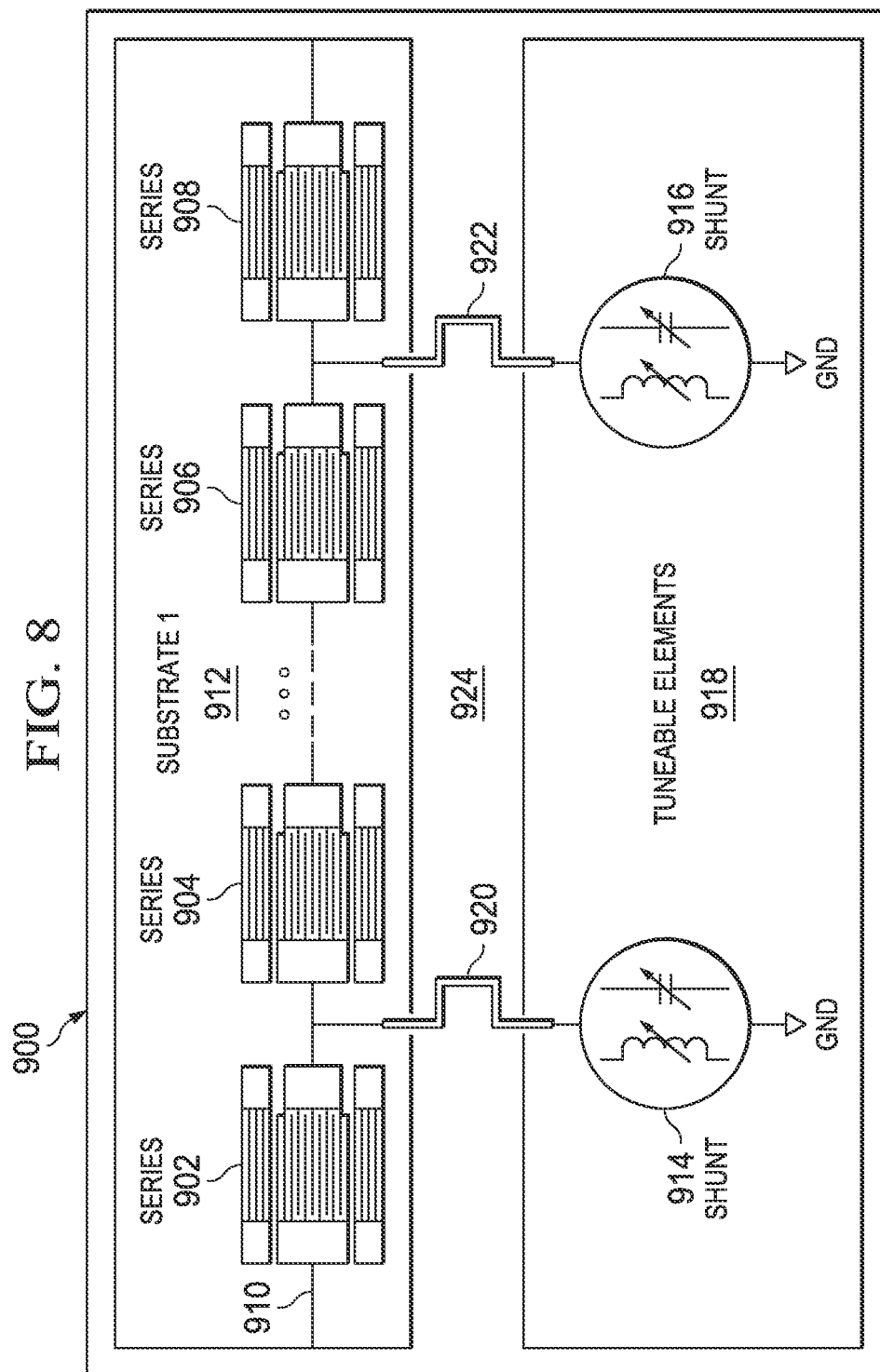


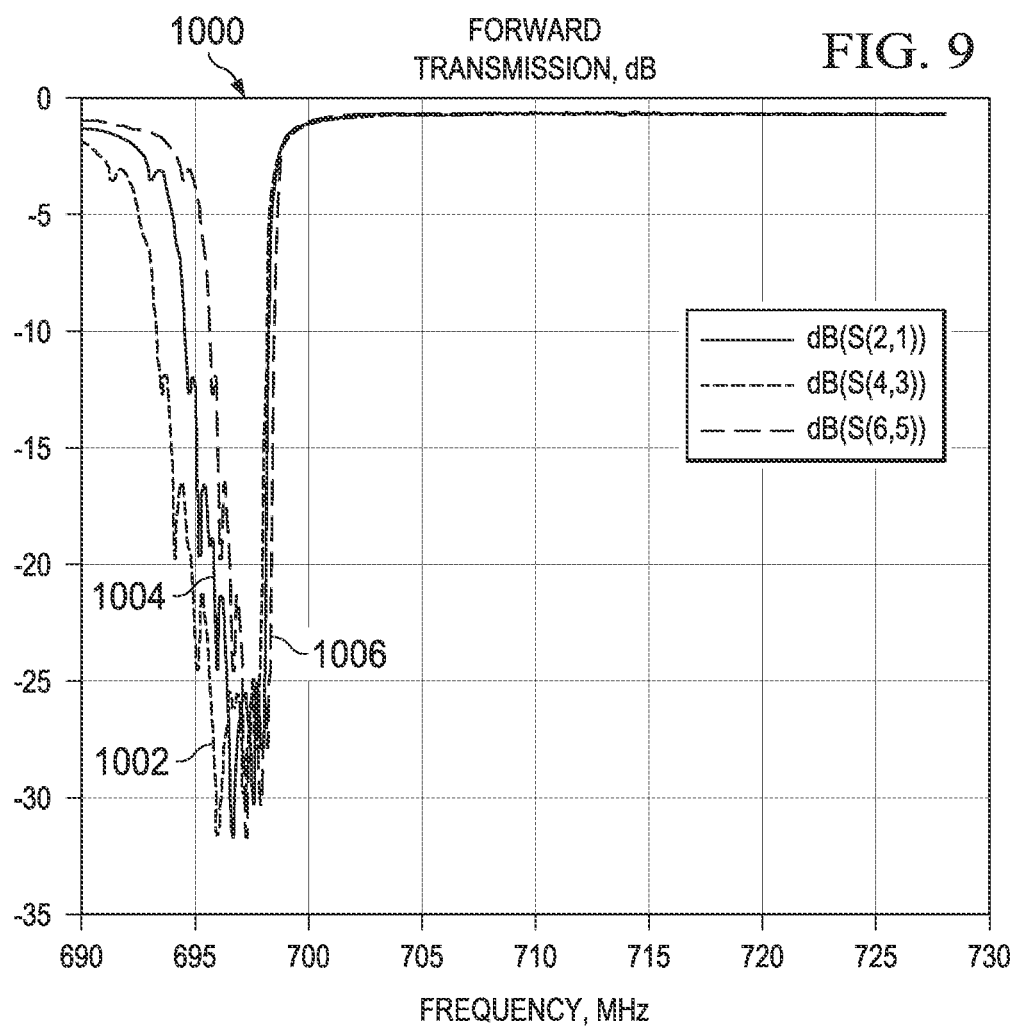












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ACOUSTIC FILTER AND METHOD OF ACOUSTIC FILTER MANUFACTURE

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates generally to an acoustic wave device and method, and more particularly to an acoustic filter device and method.

BACKGROUND

Generally, the increasing use wireless communication systems has led to more dense utilization of the wireless spectrum, bringing adjacently-used frequency bands closer together. The use of pass-band filters is not ideal, as such filters may not be capable of filtering-out interference in the adjacent frequency bands. Moreover, receivers can suffer various interferences from internal and external transmit signal leakage, and these interferences can adversely affect duplexers or receiving filters.

Acoustic wave filters, such as surface acoustic wave (SAW) filters or bulk acoustic wave (BAW) filters, can be used to filter out interference, such as between frequency bands. An acoustic wave filter circuit generally includes multiple acoustic wave resonators, which convert electrical signals into acoustic waves, and vice versa. A SAW resonator typically includes a piezoelectric crystal or ceramic material with input and output interdigital transducers (IDTs) formed in a thin film metal on the piezoelectric material, where the acoustic wave propagates on the surface of the piezoelectric material. A BAW resonator typically includes a piezoelectric material with two electrodes formed on either side of the substrate, where the acoustic wave propagates through the bulk of the piezoelectric material. Piezoelectric materials include, for example, aluminum nitride, zinc oxide, quartz, lithium niobate, lithium tantalate, lanthanum gallium silicate, lead zirconate titanate. Various piezoelectric materials, such as quartz, may be manufactured with a selected cut angle, such as AT-cut, ST-cut, Y-cut, and rotated Y-cut, each of which provides different operating characteristics for the resonator.

Acoustic wave devices may be fabricated, for example, with standard integrated circuit technology. A bulk piezoelectric material may be used as the substrate. Alternatively, insulating silicon, or a silicon dioxide layer over silicon semiconductor, may be used as the substrate. If silicon is used, a piezoelectric material layer, such as zinc oxide, is formed on the substrate. The IDTs may be formed on or under the piezoelectric layer using, for example, an integrated circuit etching or lift-off process. In the etching process, a metal layer is formed on the device, and photolithography is used to positively pattern the IDTs and remove the unwanted metal from the device. In the lift-off process, photolithography is used to negatively pattern the IDTs, a metal layer is deposited, and the unwanted metal is lifted-off of the device.

The foregoing structures and fabrication processes are disadvantageous, as they fail to attain the requisite filtering performance called for in contemporary wireless networks, particularly given the increasingly dense use of adjacent frequency bands. Moreover, the known filter structures are not scaled desirably for contemporary networks.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An embodiment acoustic filter provides a plurality of series acoustic resonators coupled in series on a first resonator substrate, a plurality of shunt resonators on a second resonator substrate, and a support substrate. The first and second reso-

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nator substrates are mounted on the support substrate. The filter further provides a plurality of electrical connections, wherein each respective electrical connection electrically couples a respective one of the plurality of shunt resonators to a respective one of the plurality of series acoustic resonators.

An embodiment method of fabricating an acoustic filter provides for forming a plurality of series acoustic resonators coupled in series on a first resonator substrate, and a plurality of shunt resonators on a second resonator substrate. The first and second resonator substrates are mounted on a support substrate, and are electrically coupled to each of the plurality of shunt resonators to a respective one of the plurality of series acoustic resonators.

An embodiment wireless communication device comprises an antenna, an antenna duplexer coupled to an antenna, a mixer, and an input amplifier and an acoustic filter coupled between the antenna duplexer and the mixer, wherein the acoustic filter comprises a first resonator substrate comprising a plurality of series acoustic resonators, and a second resonator substrate comprising a plurality of shunt resonators, wherein each of the plurality of shunt resonators is electrically coupled to a respective one of the plurality of series acoustic resonators.

Advantages of one or more of the disclosed embodiments include a reduction or elimination of interference from adjacent frequency bands, as well as a reduction in size and/or cost of wireless equipment, such as a base-station or user equipment, and their components.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a more complete understanding of the present invention, and the advantages thereof, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a prior art ladder type SAW filter;

FIG. 2 illustrates an acoustic wave filter in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 3 illustrates series SAW resonators with SAW shunt resonators in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 4 is a graph comparing filter performance;

FIG. 5 illustrates series BAW resonators with shunt SAW resonators in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 6 illustrates series SAW resonators with shunt BAW resonators in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 7 illustrates series SAW resonators with shunt LC resonators in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 8 illustrates series SAW resonators with tunable shunt resonators in accordance with an embodiment of the invention;

FIG. 9 is a graph comparing filter performance; and

FIG. 10 is a block diagram of a wireless communications device including acoustic wave filters in accordance with an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

The making and using of the presently preferred embodiments are discussed in detail below. It should be appreciated, however, that the present invention provides many applicable inventive concepts that can be embodied in a wide variety of specific contexts. The specific embodiments discussed are

merely illustrative of specific ways to make and use the invention, and do not limit the scope of the invention.

The present invention will be described primarily with respect to embodiments in a specific context, namely a surface acoustic wave resonators in a stop-band filter used in a radio frequency (RF) front end of a wireless base-station. The invention may also be applied, however, to other types of acoustic devices, such as bulk acoustic wave resonators and the like, as well as to other types of devices and filters, such as antenna duplexers, intermediate frequency (IF) filters, delay lines, and the like. The invention may be applied in many types of wireless or cellular systems, such as UMTS, WCDMA, cdma2000, IEEE 802.16, WiMAX, GSM, 3GPP LTE, LTE-A, and the like, as well as systems that provide for a combination of two or more of these technologies.

In a frequency division duplexing (FDD) system, the possibility of out-band interference and transmit signal leakage generally poses higher requirements on the out-band suppression of the duplexer or receiving filter. Increasing out-band suppression, however, can increase in-band insertion loss, as well as the size and cost of components. When the out-band suppression of the duplexer or the filter is not high enough, the interference can affect the linearity of the receiver. For example, in a FDD device, insufficient duplexer isolation can result in transmit signal leakage into the receiver.

FIG. 1 illustrates a prior art ladder-type saw filter 200. Saw resonators 202, 204, 206, 208 are connected in series in the main signal path 220. Shunt resonators 210, 212 are connected between main signal path and ground. The series-shunt combinations act as inductance-capacitance-resistance (LCR) impedance elements. There may be many such series-shunt elements in a single ladder-type saw filter. All of the resonators are manufactured on the same substrate 214. Generally, such a traditional ladder-type saw filter suffers extra insertion loss due to the long metal connections 216, 218 between the main signal path 220 and shunt resonators 210, 212. Being formed on a single substrate, all of the resonators in the device are based on the same resonating mechanism, in this case surface acoustic wave. Alternatively, all of the resonators are based on another resonating mechanism, such as bulk acoustic wave. In any event, such devices are not formed as mixed resonator structures (i.e., SAW and BAW filters). In an effort to reduce signal loss, different metals and metal alloys, such as copper and copper/aluminum alloy, have been used to replace aluminum as the connection material.

FIG. 2 illustrates an embodiment of a novel acoustic filter having a series of resonators and shunt resonators fabricated on different substrates. Additionally or alternatively, the series and shunt resonators can be fabricated using different materials. Utilizing different substrates and/or materials allows the performance of each type of resonator to be optimized individually to improve overall filter performance. Individual optimization provides fewer constraints and greater freedom of design for each resonator or type of resonator because the other resonators or types of resonators generally do not need to be taken into account.

Generally, RF filter miniaturization is an integral part of wireless base station size and performance. The disclosed embodiments enable a reduction in size of a wireless device's RF front end filters while improving filter performance.

Embodiments of the invention are applicable to a wide frequency range, for example up to 3 GHz, and therefore have world wide application. For example, if an implementation currently uses an external filter attached to a main base station, an embodiment allows the external filter to be removed without sacrificing system performance. Further, by fabricating series and shunt resonators on different substrates, shorter

circuit routing can be implemented, resulting in smaller die size, less printed circuit board (PCB) area, and the like.

In FIG. 2, acoustic filter 300 includes series resonators 302, 304, 306, 308 in series in the main signal path 310. The series resonators are fabricated on a first resonator substrate 312. Shunt resonators 314, 316 are connected between the main signal path 310 and ground. The shunt resonators are fabricated on a separate, second resonator substrate 318. Alternatively, each of the first and second substrates may include multiple individual substrates. Because the series and shunt resonators are fabricated on separate substrates, the series and shunt resonators may be fabricated as different types of resonators, such as the series resonators being SAW resonators and the shunt resonators being BAW resonators. With the separate substrates, each type of resonator, series and shunt, may be optimized for its specific application. Furthermore, the two substrates may be placed close together such that the metal connections 320, 322 between the shunt resonators and the main signal path may be made shorter than the case where all of the resonators are manufactured on a single substrate, thereby reducing insertion loss.

The two resonator substrates may be disposed adjacent to each other on a support substrate 324, for example, in a ceramic package or functioning as a printed circuit board or motherboard. The support substrate 324 may be formed from a ceramic material, an insulating laminate such as Bismaleimide Triazine (BT), or another electrical insulating material.

Connections 320, 322 between the substrates may be wire bonds connecting contact pads for the shunt resonators on the second resonator substrate to contact pads for the main signal path on the first resonator substrate. Alternatively, the connections may include vias in the resonator substrates, solder ball connections to contact pads on the support substrate, and traces on the support substrate connecting the contact pads. In another embodiment, the resonator substrates may be stacked, and the connections made, for example, with through-substrate vias (TSVs) and respective contact pads. In another embodiment, the resonator substrates may be connected in a face-up tape automated bonding (TAB) type arrangement with the connections between the substrates being made by lead frame fingers to conductive pads on the substrates. A further embodiment provides a structure in which the resonator substrates may be connected in a face-down flip-chip type arrangement with the connections between the substrates being made by solder balls or conductive bumps. In a stacked or flip-chip arrangement, a gap between substrates may be provided to allow for propagation of the acoustic wave, such as the surface acoustic wave in a SAW resonator.

In an embodiment, the two resonator substrates may be mounted on a support substrate in an acoustic filter package. Alternatively, the two resonator substrates may be mounted on a support substrate by solder or other mechanical methods along with other circuitry substrates as a multi-chip module. As another alternative, the two resonator substrates may be mounted on a support substrate functioning as a motherboard for other circuitry in the device. Connection materials for the various types of electrical connections described above include solder, tin, lead, silver, copper, aluminum, gold, nickel, alloys thereof, combinations thereof, and other conductive materials (and alloys and combinations with the foregoing metals).

In an embodiment, the series resonators and shunt resonators in a filter are fabricated on different substrates. FIG. 3 illustrates separate substrates with the same type of resonators (in this case, SAW resonators), used for both the series resonators and the shunt resonators. In FIG. 3, acoustic filter

400 includes series SAW resonators **402, 404, 406, 408** in series in the main signal path **410**. The series SAW resonators are fabricated on a first resonator substrate **412**. Shunt SAW resonators **414, 416** are connected between the main signal path **410** and ground. The shunt SAW resonators are fabricated on a different, second resonator substrate **418**. Alternatively, the series resonators and the shunt resonators may be BAW resonators. Metal connections **420, 422** between the two substrates connect the shunt resonators to the main signal path. The two resonator substrates are disposed next to each other on a support substrate **424**, for example, in a ceramic package or functioning as a printed circuit board or motherboard.

FIG. 4 is a graph **500** comparing stop-band filter performance of traditional SAW filter **200** of FIG. 1 with the SAW filter **400** embodiment of FIG. 3. As can be seen in the graph, the frequency response of SAW filter **400** (curve **502**) is improved compared to the frequency response of SAW filter **200** (curve **504**). Frequency response curve **502** for the SAW filter **400** has improved pass-band and stop-band characteristics versus the frequency response curve **504** for SAW filter **200**.

In various embodiments, different resonating mechanisms may be used for different resonators based on their individual application requirements. For example, the series and/or shunt resonators can be surface acoustic wave resonators, bulk acoustic wave resonators, lumped element resonators, dielectric resonators, and the like. Furthermore, the series resonators may be fabricated on multiple substrates, and the shunt resonators may be fabricated on multiple substrates. Any of the different types of resonators may be used for any individual series or shunt resonator, and each type of resonator may be used in combination with any of the same of different types of resonators in a filter.

FIG. 5 illustrates an embodiment utilizing series BAW resonators with shunt SAW resonators fabricated on different substrates. In FIG. 5, acoustic filter **600** includes series BAW resonators **602, 604, 606, 608** in series in the main signal path **610**. The series BAW resonators are fabricated on a first resonator substrate **612**. Shunt SAW resonators **614, 616** are connected between the main signal path **610** and ground. The shunt SAW resonators are fabricated on a separate, second resonator substrate **618**. Metal connections **620, 622** between the two substrates connect the shunt resonators to the main signal path. The two resonator substrates are disposed next to each other on a support substrate **624**, for example, in a ceramic package or functioning as a printed circuit board or motherboard.

FIG. 6 illustrates an embodiment utilizing series SAW resonators with shunt BAW resonators fabricated on different substrates. In FIG. 6, acoustic filter **700** includes series SAW resonators **702, 704, 706, 708** in series in the main signal path **710**. The series SAW resonators are fabricated on a first resonator substrate **712**. Shunt BAW resonators **714, 716** are connected between the main signal path **710** and ground. The shunt BAW resonators are fabricated on a different, second resonator substrate **718**. Metal connections **720, 722** between the two substrates connect the shunt resonators to the main signal path. The two resonator substrates are disposed next to each other on a support substrate **724**, for example, in a ceramic package or functioning as a printed circuit board or motherboard.

FIG. 7 illustrates an embodiment utilizing series SAW resonators with shunt LC resonators fabricated on different substrates. In FIG. 7, acoustic filter **800** includes series SAW resonators **802, 804, 806, 808** in series in the main signal path **810**. The series SAW resonators are fabricated on a first

resonator substrate **812**. Shunt LC resonators **814, 816** are connected between the main signal path **810** and ground. The shunt LC resonators are fabricated on a different, second resonator substrate **818**. Alternatively, the series resonators may be BAW resonators. Metal connections **820, 822** between the two substrates connect the shunt resonators to the main signal path. The two resonator substrates are disposed next to each other on a support substrate **824**, for example, in a ceramic package or functioning as a printed circuit board or motherboard.

The series and/or shunt resonator can also be realized using piezoelectric material or varactors, so their resonance frequency is tunable. A filter fabricated with such resonators has a tunable bandwidth and/or center frequency. FIG. 8 illustrates an embodiment utilizing series SAW resonators with shunt tunable resonators fabricated on different substrates. In FIG. 8, acoustic filter **900** includes series SAW resonators **902, 904, 906, 908** in series in the main signal path **910**. The series SAW resonators are fabricated on a first resonator substrate **912**. Shunt tunable resonators **914, 916** are connected between the main signal path **910** and ground. The shunt tunable resonators are fabricated on a different, second resonator substrate **918**. Alternatively, the series resonators may be BAW resonators. Metal connections **920, 922** between the two substrates connect the shunt resonators to the main signal path. The two resonator substrates are disposed next to each other on a support substrate **924**, for example, in a ceramic package or functioning as a printed circuit board or motherboard.

FIG. 9 is a graph **1000** comparing filter performance. When shunt resonators **914, 916** in FIG. 8 are tuned to different resonant frequencies, acoustic filter **900** can have different performance curves **1002, 1004, 1006**.

FIG. 10 illustrates a block diagram of a wireless communications device **100**, such as a wireless or cellular base station, which includes one or more acoustic wave RF filters in accordance with an embodiment of the invention. In various embodiments, one or more of the RF filters used in device **100** are implemented as acoustic filters **300**. Any of the embodiment acoustic filters disclosed herein may be used for any of the RF filters **300** in device **100**. In FIG. 10, antenna **102** is connected to a front-end duplexer including acoustic wave RF filter **300** in the transmit circuit and RF filter **300** in the receive circuit. Another acoustic wave RF filter **300** is positioned in the transmit path between mixer **112** and power amplifier **110**. A fourth acoustic wave RF filter **300** is positioned in the receive path between low noise amplifier **116** and mixer **118**. The order of various components depicted in this drawing may be different in other embodiments. For example, the low noise amplifier **116** and the RF filter **114** may be reversed. Other circuitry that is included in a wireless communications device is omitted for clarity. As an example of filter operation, acoustic wave filter **300** between amplifier **116** and mixer **118** filters out the transmitter leakage that may have leaked into the receive chain. By reducing leakage from the transmitter, the linearity requirements of the associated receive circuit may be reduced.

Although the present invention and its advantages have been described in detail, it should be understood that various changes, substitutions and alterations can be made herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims. Moreover, the scope of the present application is not intended to be limited to the particular embodiments of the process, machine, manufacture, composition of matter, means, methods and steps described in the specification. As one of ordinary skill in the art will readily appreciate from the disclosure of the present inven-

tion, processes, machines, manufacture, compositions of matter, means, methods, or steps, presently existing or later to be developed, that perform substantially the same function or achieve substantially the same result as the corresponding embodiments described herein may be utilized according to the present invention. Accordingly, the appended claims are intended to include within their scope such processes, machines, manufacture, compositions of matter, means, methods, or steps.

What is claimed is:

1. An acoustic filter comprising:
 - a plurality of series acoustic resonators coupled in series on a first resonator substrate;
 - a plurality of shunt resonators on a second resonator substrate, wherein one of the first and second resonator substrates is quartz with a first cut angle, and the other of the first and second resonator substrates is quartz with a second cut angle;
 - a support substrate, wherein the first and second resonator substrates are mounted on the support substrate; and
 - a plurality of electrical connections, wherein each respective electrical connection electrically couples a respective one of the plurality of shunt resonators to a respective one of the plurality of series acoustic resonators.
2. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the plurality of series acoustic resonators are surface acoustic wave resonators.
3. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the plurality of series acoustic resonators are bulk acoustic wave resonators.
4. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the plurality of shunt resonators are surface acoustic wave resonators.
5. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the plurality of shunt resonators are bulk acoustic wave resonators.
6. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the plurality of shunt resonators are inductor-capacitor (LC) wave resonators.
7. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the support substrate is formed from at least one of a ceramic material or an insulating laminate.
8. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the series acoustic resonators and shunt resonators are at least partially formed from different materials from each other.
9. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the first and second cut angles are each selected from the group consisting of: AT-cut, ST-cut, Y-cut, and rotated Y-cut.
10. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the support substrate is a printed circuit board.
11. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of electrical connections comprises a wirebond connection.
12. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein each of the plurality of electrical connections comprises a solder ball connection.
13. The acoustic filter of claim 1, wherein the plurality of shunt resonators are tunable resonators.
14. The acoustic filter of claim 13, wherein the tunable resonators each comprise a varactor.
15. The acoustic filter of claim 14, wherein the tunable resonators each further comprise a tunable inductor.
16. A method of fabricating an acoustic filter, the method comprising:
 - forming a plurality of series acoustic resonators coupled in series on a first resonator substrate;
 - forming a plurality of shunt resonators on a second resonator substrate, wherein one of the first and second reso-

nator substrates is quartz with a first cut angle, and the other of the first and second resonator substrates is quartz with a second cut angle;

mounting the first and second resonator substrates on a support substrate; and

electrically coupling each of the plurality of shunt resonators to a respective one of the plurality of series acoustic resonators.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein the plurality of series acoustic resonators are all surface acoustic wave resonators or all bulk acoustic wave resonators, and wherein the plurality of shunt resonators are all surface acoustic wave resonators or all bulk acoustic wave resonators.

18. The method of claim 16, wherein the first and second cut angles are each selected from the group consisting of: AT-cut, ST-cut, Y-cut, and rotated Y-cut.

19. The method of claim 16, wherein the electrically coupling comprises wire bonding a respective contact pad of each of the plurality of shunt resonators to a respective contact pad of the respective one of the plurality of series acoustic resonators.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the mounting of the first and second resonator substrates further comprises placing the respective contact pad of each of the plurality of shunt resonators adjacent to a respective contact pad of the respective one of the plurality of series acoustic resonators.

21. A wireless communication device comprising:

- an antenna;
- an antenna duplexer coupled to an antenna;
- a mixer; and
- an input amplifier and an acoustic filter coupled between the antenna duplexer and the mixer, wherein the acoustic filter comprises a first resonator substrate comprising a plurality of series acoustic resonators, and a second resonator substrate comprising a plurality of shunt resonators, wherein one of the first and second resonator substrates is quartz with a first cut angle, and the other of the first and second resonator substrates is quartz with a second cut angle, and wherein each of the plurality of shunt resonators is electrically coupled to a respective one of the plurality of series acoustic resonators.

22. The wireless communication device of claim 21, wherein the plurality of series acoustic resonators are all surface acoustic wave resonators or all bulk acoustic wave resonators, and wherein the plurality of shunt resonators are all surface acoustic wave resonators or all bulk acoustic wave resonators.

23. The wireless communication device of claim 21, wherein the first and second cut angles are each selected from the group consisting of: AT-cut, ST-cut, Y-cut, and rotated Y-cut.

24. The wireless communication device of claim 21, wherein an input of the input amplifier is coupled to the antenna duplexer, wherein an output of the input amplifier is coupled to an input of the acoustic filter, and wherein an output of the acoustic filter is coupled to an input of the mixer.

25. The wireless communication device of claim 21, wherein an input of the acoustic filter is coupled to the antenna duplexer, wherein an output of the acoustic filter is coupled to an input of the input amplifier, and wherein an output of the input amplifier is coupled to an input of the mixer.